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ABSTRACT

A unit to help junior high school students become aware of the importance of written communication contains teacher and student materials. The teacher's section contains a description of objectives, materials, and evaluation methods. In the student section, a reading on becoming a good correspondent precedes sections on personal letters, thank-you notes, and business correspondence. Each section includes a guideline to the correct format of the letter and several application exercises. Also included is a section on addressing envelopes. (LP)

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Letter Writing.....

....A guide for good correspondence

READING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
Greenfield Junior High School
1109 Pacheco Road
Bakersfield, California 93307

INTRODUCTION

This unit was developed to help students become aware of the importance of written communication.

OBJECTIVES

1. The student will demonstrate the ability to communicate ideas correctly by writing different kinds of letters.

2. The student will, by writing letters, demonstrate a knowledge of the mechanics of English.

3. Legible handwriting will be considered to be included in #2 above.

MATERIALS

Mini Unit, paper, ruler, pen and pencil.

EVALUATION

Each letter in this unit will be graded according to the rubric (specific grading system) on page ii. Letter grades (A B C D & F) will correspond to levels, e.g.: Level five letters receive an A grade; Level four letters receive a B grade, etc.

Rubric for Letter

A level five letter:

1. Will use proper envelope (address) form.
2. Will transmit clearly the message intended.
3. Will use proper letter form
4. Will contain a minimum of mechanical errors.
5. May contain a minimum (3) punctuation and capitalization errors. (conventions)
6. May contain a minimum (3) of spelling errors.
7. Will be legible.

A level four letter:

1. Will contain a minimum (2) of address form errors.
2. Will transmit the message intended.
3. Will contain a minimum (2) of letter form errors.
4. Will contain a minimum of mechanical errors.
5. May contain a minimum of conventional errors.
6. May contain a minimum (3) spelling errors.
7. Will be legible.

A level three letter:

1. May contain several address form errors.
2. Will transmit message.
3. May contain several letter form errors.
4. May contain several mechanical errors that do not interfere with message.
5. May contain several conventional errors that do interfere with message.
6. May contain several spelling errors that do not interfere with message.
7. Writing may be poor, but legible.

A level two letter:

1. Envelope may be undeliverable.
2. Message may be unclear.
3. Letter form may contain many errors.
4. Will contain many mechanical errors.
5. Will contain many conventional errors.
6. Will contain many spelling errors.
7. Writing may be illegible.

A level one letter

1. Envelope will be undeliverable.
2. Message will be unclear.
3. Writing illegible.

BECOMING A GOOD CORRESPONDENT

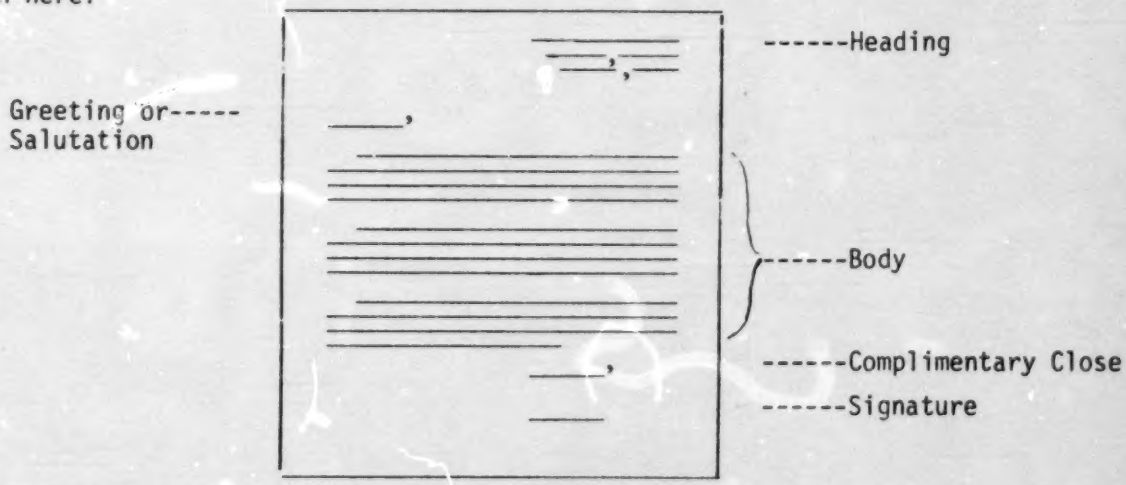
Letter writing is a form of communication. There are different types of letters: personal, business and note writing. Letter writing should be like talking and therefore it should be as easy for you to write as to talk with a person. Why does it seem harder? The difficulty could be that you are uncertain about the form your letter should have. Both a baseball diamond and a letter are laid out according to a definite pattern. In playing baseball, you lay out the diamond first and then you play ball. In writing letters, you need to begin by learning correct letter form. Later you concentrate on making the content of your letters interesting and/or informative.

PART ONE: The Form of a Personal Letter

A personal letter has five parts:

1. heading
2. greeting or salutation
3. body
4. complimentary close
5. signature

When hand written, it usually is written in indented or slant style as shown here.



GUIDES TO A CORRECT PERSONAL LETTER FORM

I. Heading

A. Tell in the heading where and when the letter is being written.

Example: 1100 Pacheco Road
Bakersfield, California 93307
August 3, 1978

B. Use of punctuation in the heading

1. Use a comma between the name of the town or city and that of the state.

2. Use a comma between the day of the month and the year.

3. No other punctuation is needed in the heading.

4. Capitalize all words in the heading.

5. Avoid abbreviations.

II. Greeting or Salutation

A. Give the name of the person to whom you are writing.

Example: Dear Kim,
(correct)
Dear Mother,

Dear Friend,
(acceptable)
Dear old Pal,

1. Capitalize the first word and the name of the person.

Example: Dear Phil and George,

My dear Mary,

2. Use a comma after the greeting.

Example: Dear Mother,

Dear Uncle Tom,

III. Body

A. Paragraphs

1. Begin a new paragraph for each new idea.

2. Indent each paragraph.

(continued)

3. Each sentence begins with a capital letter.

4. Bring the other person into the things you write about.

5. Write as you would talk, avoiding stiff, formal language.

6. Make him feel that you enjoy his friendship.

7. Keep your letter cheerful.

8. Do not spoil your letter with such worn-out expression as:

    a. How are you? I am fine and hope you are the same.

    b. Since I have nothing to do, I'll write you a letter.

    c. Excuse mistakes.

    d. Well, I guess I'd better close now.

    e. Hoping to hear from you soon.

    f. Avoid using the word "I" as much as possible.

    g. Don't tell a joke and then enclose "Ha! Ha" in parentheses. Give your reader credit for being able to understand and appreciate your humor.

IV. Complimentary Close

A. Regards for the receiver.

1. Choose a closing that is appropriate to express your feelings to the person you are writing.

Example: Sincerely,

Yours truly,

Gratefully yours,

Your loving sister,

Your friend,

2. Capitalize only the first word of the complimentary close.

Example: Yours truly,

Sincerely yours,

3. Follow the closing with a comma.

Example: Yours truly,

Sincerely yours,

V. Signature

A. Your name .

1. Sign the name by which the person to whom you are writing calls you.

2. Use no punctuation after your signature.

PART TWO: The Envelope for a Personal Letter.

Addressing your envelope is very important. Properly done, it assures that your letter will arrive at its destination. You must address it correctly. Always use the same form you used in writing your letter, eg. slant form.

Example: Personal letter envelope, indented or slant style.

Your name and address	Miss Janet Hill 926 Graneville Street Laton, California 93545
Receiver's name and address	Miss Mary Hill 1300 East Avenue Riverdale, California 96872

GUIDES TO ADDRESSING THE ENVELOPE FOR A PERSONAL LETTER

I. Information about the sender (you).

A. Upper left hand corner of envelope

1. Your name
2. Your house number and street
3. Your city or town, state and zip code
4. Comma between city and state
5. Capitalize all words in your address
6. Use no abbreviations, except for Mr., Mrs., Ms., and Dr.
7. Use no comma between state and zip code

Example:

Jerry Brown
1109 Pacheco Road
Bakersfield, California 93307

II. Information about the receiver (your friend).

A. Lower part of the right-hand half of the envelope.

1. Your friend's name.
2. His house number and street.
3. His city or town, state and zip code.
4. Comma between the town and state.
5. Capitalize all words in the address.
6. Avoid abbreviations except for titles such as Dr., Mr., Mrs. (these have periods after them).
7. Comma between city and state.

Example:

Mr. Henry Jones
5821 Kirk Street
Bakersfield, California
93307 *

* If you do not have room to place the zip code after the state, it is proper to place it right below the state.

Last, but very important, place your stamp in the upper right hand corner of the envelope.

ACTIVITIES
for a
PERSONAL LETTER

Copy these sentences on a separate sheet of paper. Complete them by putting the correct word or words in the spaces.

1. The part of the letter containing the news, activities and so forth is called the _____.

2. The first word in a greeting or salutation begins with a _____ _____.

3. The beginning of each paragraph in the body of the letter is _____.

4. __ _____ all words in the heading.

5. A _____ is placed at the end of the complimentary close and after the _____.

6. The part of the letter containing your street address, city, state and date is called the _____.

7. The numbers following the state are called the _____ _____.

capital letter	body	comma	indented
greeting	zip code	heading	capitalize

On a sheet of paper write the following letter in slant form.

Use 1109 pacheco road, bakersfield, california 93307 as your address. Use today's date.

dear mother, i am writing this letter in my classroom. we are working on a mini-unit entitled "Letter Writing." in this unit we will be learning to write personal letters, note writing and business letters. what are we having for dinner tonight? would it be o.k. to invite a friend to eat with us? there is a good movie playing at the Stockdale Six Theaters. do you think the family might go to see it? i heard it was great! maybe we could go Saturday night. your son (or) daughter, your name.

After you have written your letter, go back and check to see if you:

a. used slant form
b. capitalized all necessary words
c. placed comma's and other punctuation marks in the right places.
d. indented paragraphs
e. spelled each word correctly

(continued)

Now that you have checked over your letter and made all the necessary corrections, turn your paper over and on the back draw an envelope, 6½" x 3½". For the return address use the address you used in the heading of your letter. Use your mother's name and address for the receiver.

After you have completed your envelope turn your paper in to your teacher.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Do you have a friend to whom you could write a personal letter? Now that you know the correct form, why not practice using it by writing a letter to someone? If you decide to write a letter, show it to your teacher and she will give you extra credit.

THANK YOU NOTES

A thank you note sometimes is written to a person who gives you a gift. It is a way of thanking a person who does not live close to you. It is also a formal way of thanking someone, even though he does not live at a distance. Thank you notes are often written to people who have shown hospitality to you in their home.

Look at the thank you note below. Notice that only the date is placed in the upper right-hand corner. Sometimes only the day of the week is used for the date. It is assumed that the one to whom the note is sent is familiar with the writer's address.

The remainder of the note follows the form of a friendly letter. A thank you note should always be hand written. It is generally quite short.

Example of a thank you note:

March 10, 19—

Dear Aunt Doris,

Thank you for the beautiful gold pin you sent me for my birthday. I wore it with my blue suit and received many compliments.

With love,
Nancy

Most thank you notes are of two kinds:

1. Letters thanking someone for a gift or for a special favor.
2. Letters written after a visit, called "bread-and-butter" letters.

GUIDES FOR WRITING THANK YOU NOTES

1. Write thank you notes promptly.

2. Give some particular reason for appreciating the gift or favor.

3. After a visit, write a thank you note to your hostess. Usually she will be the mother of the friend whom you visited. Write also to that friend.

4. Keep the letter short.

ACTIVITIES
for
THANK YOU NOTES

Use the guide for writing personal letters and try to improve the following sentences. Use a separate sheet of paper.

1. I don't feel much like writing, but Mother says I have to get my birthday thank you notes sent today.

2. Thank you for the billfold. Three other people gave me one too.

3. I'm sorry that I did not write to you a week ago to thank you for the birthday gift. I forgot all about it.

4. Tell your mother thanks for me. I really enjoyed my visit.

5. Thank you for the sweater. I guess you just forgot that I don't like brown very well.

For this activity you will need a white piece of paper and an ink pen. Remember to be neat.

A. Write a thank you note for a gift you have received.

B. Write a thank you note for hospitality shown you.

After you have finished both activities, turn them in to your teacher.

BUSINESS LETTERS

The difference between the personal letter and the business letter is form and content. The form we will study in this unit is called semi-block. This is one of the most popular for business letters. There are variations of styles, but for this unit only, we will practice this form.

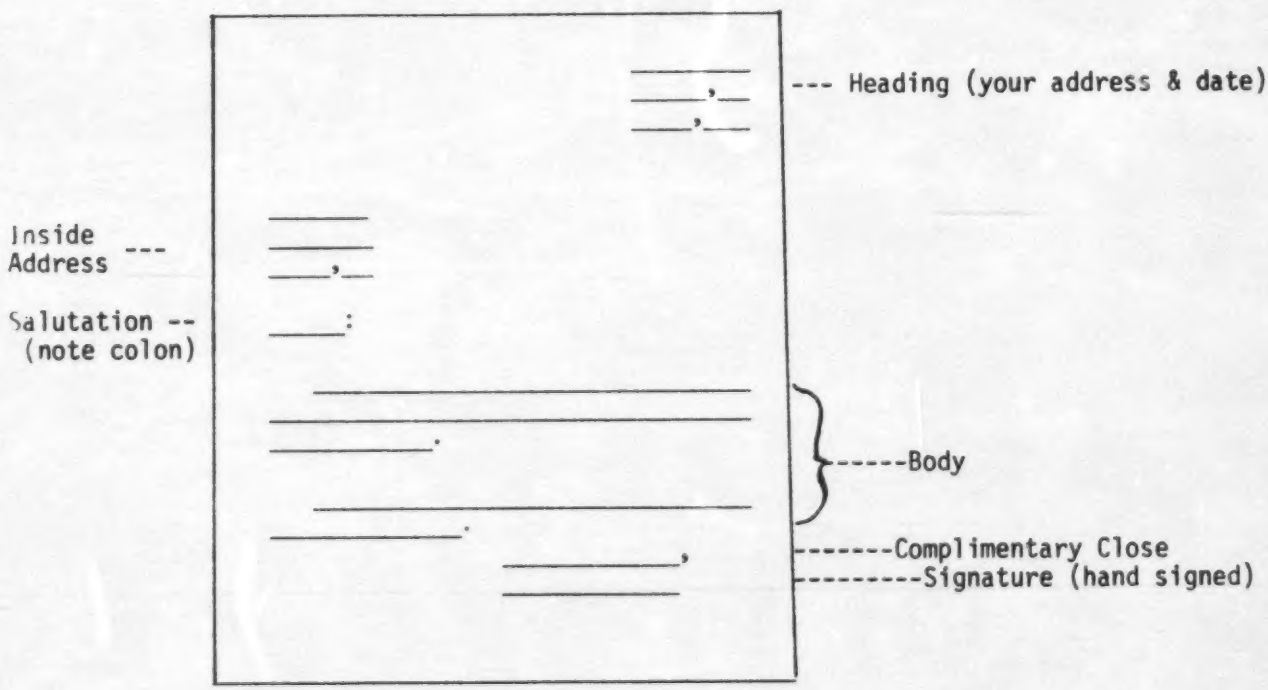
PART ONE: The Form of a Business Letter

Unlike the personal letter, the business letter has an inside address. Business letters are usually typewritten, except for the signature, but hand written in ink is acceptable. Use black or blue ink.

A business letter has six parts:

1. heading
2. inside address
3. greeting or salutation
4. body
5. complimentary close
6. signature

GUIDES TO A SEMI-BLOCK FORM BUSINESS LETTER



GUIDES TO A SEMI-BLOCK FORM BUSINESS LETTER

I. Heading

A. The heading is placed in the upper right hand section of your letter. It will form your right hand margin. (See sample form page 11)

B. Punctuation in the heading

1. Comma between city and state. NONE between state and zip code.

2. Comma between date and year.

II. Inside Address

A. Give the name of the company, address, city, state and zip code. This should be as complete as the address you will place on your envelope.

1. Begin each word in the company's name with a capital letter. Words such as and, of and the need not be capitalized unless they are the beginning of the company's name.

Examples:

Bank of America

Jones and Jones Company

American Institute of Physical Fitness

2. Use commas between city and state. Zip code after the state.

3. Avoid abbreviations.

III. Greeting or Salutation

A. This is a business letter! If you know the name of the person to whom you are writing, you may use his title and last name.

Example: Dear Mr. Jones:

If you know only the name of the company you may select one of the following:

Gentlemen:

Dear Sir:

1. Capitalize the first word and the name of the person.

Example: Dear Sir:

2. Use a colon (:) after the greeting or salutation.

Example: Gentlemen:

IV. Body

A. Business letters are written in a business fashion.

1. State your purpose immediately.

2. Be brief and to the point.

3. Be courteous.

4. Indent each new paragraph. Business letters should not be long. Some letters may have only one paragraph.

5. Double space between paragraphs. (If hand written leave a space about the size of one line of writing.)

6. Include all information they will need in fulfilling your request.

7. Write on one side of the paper only.

V. Complimentary Close

A. Regards for the receiver

1. Use closings such as:

Yours truly,

Very truly yours,

Sincerely,

2. Capitalize only the first letter of the complimentary close.

Example: Very truly yours,

3. End with a comma.

Example: Sincerely,

VI. Signature

A. Sign your name.

Example: Jerry Smith

Even if you type your letter your signature should be signed in cursive by you.

PART TWO: Envelope for a business letter.

For the semi-block form business letters, we will use block form on the envelope. Block form means that instead of slanting or indenting we will align the information.

Example:

Your Name & Address

Mark Terry
1109 Pacheco Road
Bakersfield, California 93307

Stockton Manufacturers
114 Charter Way
Stockton, California 95205

Receiver's Name & Address

ACTIVITIES
for
BUSINESS LETTERS

On a separate sheet copy the following sentences and fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. The business letter contains an _____ _____ which the personal letter does not have.
2. The _____ ends with a colon.
3. The _____ of the letter can consist of only one paragraph.
4. You should be _____ and to the _____ when stating your requests.
5. You should be sure your letter contains all the _____ the company will need to fill your request.
6. Your name should be _____ in cursive, even if you typed your letter.
7. The envelope should be in _____ form.

salutation	point	block	written
brief	information	body	inside address

On a sheet of paper write the following business letter in semi-block form. Use a pencil to write your first draft.

Use your name, 1109 pacheco road, bakersfield, california 93307 as your address. Use today's date.

Write your letter to: schools incorporated, 1400 pine street, los angeles, california 91606.

Request a school jacket. Be sure you send information so you will receive a jacket in the right color and size. Enclose your check or request the merchandise to be sent to you c.o.d. (collect on delivery). Good luck!

After you have written your letter, check these items:

1. Are all words spelled correctly?
2. Did you use correct form?
3. Did you state your school colors?
4. Did you state your size?
5. Did you enclose a check or did you request it to be sent c.o.d.?
6. Did you capitalize all necessary letters?
7. After checking your letter over and correcting all errors, write it in blue or black ink.

On the back of your letter draw an envelope 9½" x 4⅛". Address it using the correct form for a business letter.

Turn your paper in to your teacher.

ACTIVITIES
for
BUSINESS LETTERS
(continued)

Now that you have had your business letter corrected and returned to you, select one of the companies below and write a letter. Be careful!! You are going to mail this one!

1. U.S. Marine Corps, Quartermaster Department, 110 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19146. Ask for a 24 page booklet called "Our Flag".

2. International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, 1710 Broadway, New York, New York 10019 and ask for a free booklet which contains information on choosing the right clothes. The booklet is entitled "Your Dream Wardrobe."

3. Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, Department 07-60, P.O. Box 551, Burbank, California 91520. Ask for a booklet entitled "Pathways to the Stars."

4. Dennison-Carter Company, 505 So. 7th Avenue, City of Industry, California 91749. Inquire if the booklet "Lettering with a Felt-tipped Marker" is available.

Write your first letter in pencil. Look it over and correct any mistakes. Compare it with the correct business form on page 11. Ask your teacher for an envelope and address it using the correct form.

On the next page you will see the correct way to fold your letter.

PART THREE: Folding Your Letter

Many adults are not aware that they do not know how to fold a letter correctly. Below is a diagram showing you the correct way. Note: The way you fold a letter depends on the size of the envelope.

1. Practice folding a piece of paper as shown in the illustration below.
2. Fold your own letter neatly in the same way.
3. Do not seal your envelope. Turn your letter and envelope in to your teacher.
4. If you had no mistakes on your letter or envelope, you may take it home and mail it. If you had mistakes, correct them before you do this. Be sure to place your stamp in the upper right hand corner of your envelope.
5. Share what you receive in reply to your letter with the class.